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**United States Patent** [19][11] **Patent Number:** **5,479,596****Capps et al.**[45] **Date of Patent:** **Dec. 26, 1995**[54] **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR  
FORMATTING PARAGRAPHS**[75] Inventors: **Stephen P. Capps; Ernest H.  
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Calif.[21] Appl. No.: **70,096**[22] Filed: **May 27, 1993**[51] **Int. Cl.<sup>6</sup>** ..... **G06T 11/60; G06T 11/80**[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **395/148; 395/155; 364/419.17;  
345/156; 382/200**[58] **Field of Search** ..... 395/144-148,  
395/155, 117, 161; 364/419.1, 419.17, 715.03;  
382/173, 200; 345/156-184[56] **References Cited****U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A method for formatting paragraphs on a screen of a computer system including the steps of: a) entering a word on a screen of a computer system using a pointing mechanism; b) finding an associated paragraph, if any, that the word is to be associated with; c) adding the word to the associated paragraph, if one exists; and d) starting a new paragraph with the word if there is not a closely related existing paragraph. A newly-entered word can be added to an associated paragraph in basically four ways. The word can be added in a new line at the top of the paragraph, in a new line at the bottom of the paragraph, at the end of an existing line, or between words of an existing line. After a word has been entered, the text within the paragraph is repositioned as desired by the user, either implicitly or through an explicit command. For example, the words within a paragraph can be caused to "reflow" so that they are aligned between the left and right margins of the paragraph. Alternatively, the words within the paragraph can be centered or right-justified.

**26 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets**